



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SAINT PAUL**  
*Women building better communities®*

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## **NEW HOMEWORK ROOM INSPIRED BY STUDENTS' DREAMS IS UNVEILED AT DAYTON'S BLUFF REC CENTER**

**Playing off the hit show, "Extreme Makeover," Junior League of Saint Paul volunteers transform dingy after school room into colorful, fun space**

(Saint Paul, May 3, 2010) Imagine how elementary school kids would design their own space inside a city recreation center: bright colors, comfy seating, and something just plain fun. The new homework room at Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center has all of those features, thanks to Junior League of Saint Paul (JLSP) volunteers who will join rec center employees for the "big reveal" Monday, May 3.

***WHAT:** New Homework Room Unveiling*

***WHEN:** Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 3:30 pm*

***WHERE:** Dayton's Bluff Rec Center 800 Conway Street, St. Paul*

"This has been such a fun and engaging process for our students," says Toni Smith, of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. "They spend several hours a week here after school and this room was in great need of a makeover. By asking the kids for input on the design, the Junior League of Saint Paul has made an investment in our youth, boosting their confidence, and encouraging kids to take pride in their rec center."

As part of its Building Bonds through Reading and Play initiative, the Junior League of Saint Paul ([www.jlsp.org](http://www.jlsp.org)) organizes family game nights at six rec centers throughout the city, including the one at Dayton's Bluff. Recognizing that students need a quiet, clean and comfortable space for homework each day, the JLSP proposed a "makeover" for Dayton's Bluff's Rec-Check, an after school program at the rec center. Volunteers met with students in March to ask for their input on designing the perfect room.

"We went right to the experts for ideas," says JLSP President Christine Sand. "We wanted the students to take ownership by helping design this new, pleasant space which will encourage good study habits and help to promote reading success" says Sand. Research shows that children who are not fluent readers by 4<sup>th</sup> grade are likely to continue to struggle with reading into adulthood. "The Junior League of Saint Paul will follow up on this work with a broader focus on literacy that would include having our volunteers help purchase books, participate in "reading buddy" programs and help caregivers better understand the import role that reading plays in children's future success" Sand commented.

When JLSP volunteers met with students in March, students became excited about the makeover and offered ideas ranging from polka dots on the walls to a pet bunny and an electronic gaming system. Interior designer, Angel Tilsen of DesignScope, volunteered her time to draw up the plans and JLSP volunteers completed the makeover over the weekend. The new room includes new paint, furniture, a reading area, an organized storage room and a space for the children to display their artwork.

"The city needs the help of the Junior League of Saint Paul through projects like this," says Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. "With increasing budget cuts, the city is always looking for new ways to serve our residents.

We will be relying more and more on volunteers and projects like this one to ensure the success of all of our children.”

The Junior Leagues of Saint Paul's *Building Bonds* initiative aims to educate parents, caregivers and other adults how small actions – reading a book, completing a puzzle or playing a board game – can have big returns. As part of the initiative, Junior League volunteers organize family game nights throughout the year at area recreation centers. They also coordinate programs at area libraries and introduce young children to the magic of reading by giving an estimated 3,000 preschool children their own books each year.

JLSP Volunteers have twice participated in ABC's popular show, "Extreme Makeover," when it produced shows in the Twin Cities. The most recent was last fall, when volunteers helped to transform a home-based day care center in Saint Paul.

*The **Junior League of Saint Paul** is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.*

**[www.jlsp.org](http://www.jlsp.org)**